



## Henry David Thoreau Journal Entries on or around April 2<sup>nd</sup>

"What are you doing now?" he asked. "Do you keep a journal?" So I make my first entry to-day.

### SOLITUDE

To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present,--I avoid myself.

--1837, October 22 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 3)

The Indian must have possessed no small share of vital energy to have rubbed industriously stone upon stone for long months till at length he had rubbed out an axe or pestle – as though he had said in the face of the constant flux of things, I at least will live an enduring life.

--1838, April 1 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 40)

### MORNING

The atmosphere of morning gives a healthy hue to our prospects. Disease is a sluggard that overtakes, never encounters, us. We have the start each day, and may fairly distance him before the dew is off; but if we recline in the bowers of noon, he will come up with us after all. The morning dew breeds no cold. We enjoy a diurnal reprieve in the beginning of each day's creation. In the morning we do not believe in expediency; we will start afresh, and have no patching, no temporary fixtures. The afternoon man has an interest in the past; his eye is divided, and he sees indifferently well either way.

--1839, April 4 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 75)

I cannot forget the majesty of that bird at the Cliff. It was no sloop or smaller craft hove in sight, but a ship of the line, worthy to struggle with the elements. It was a great presence, as of the master of river and forest. His eye would not have quailed before the owner of the soil; none could challenge his rights. And then his retreat, sailing so steadily away, was a kind of advance. How is it that man always feels like an interloper in nature, as if he had intruded on the domains of bird and beast?

--1842, March 31 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 356)

Friends will not only live in harmony, but in melody.

--1841, April 3 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 243) (note: used in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*)

Much as has been said about American slavery, I think that commonly we do not yet realize what slavery is. If I were seriously to propose to Congress to make mankind into sausages, I have no doubt that most would smile at my proposition and, if any believed me to be in earnest, they would think that I proposed something much worse than Congress had ever done. But, gentlemen, if any of you will tell me that to make a man into a sausage would be much worse -- would be any worse -- than to make him into a slave, -- than it was then to enact the fugitive slave law, -- I shall here accuse him of foolishness, of intellectual incapacity, of making a distinction without a difference. The one is just as sensible a proposition as the other.

--1851, Between March 30 and April 22 (*Journal*, Vol. II, p. 176)

The poet says the proper study of mankind is man. I say, study to forget all that; take wider views of the universe. That is the egotism of the race. What is this our childish, gossiping, social literature, mainly in the hands of publishers? When another poet says the world is too much with us, he means, of course,

that man is too much with us. In the promulgated views of man, in institutions, in the common sense, there is narrowness and delusion. It is our weakness that so exaggerates the virtues of philanthropy and charity and makes it the highest human attribute. The world will sooner or later tire of philanthropy and all religions based on it mainly. They cannot long sustain my spirit.

--1852, April 2 (*Journal*, Vol. III, p. 381)

No fields are so barren to me as the men of whom I expect everything but get nothing. In their neighborhood I experience a painful yearning for society, which cannot be satisfied, for the hate is greater than the love.

--1853, April 3 (*Journal*, Vol. V, p. 87)

Saw black ducks in water and on land. Can see their light throats a great way with my glass. They do not dive, but dip. That liverwort in the J. Hosmer ditch is now obvious. It has little green cups on it. The radial leaves of some plants appear to have started, look brighter. The shepherd's-purse (?), and plainly the skunk-cabbage. In the brook there is the least possible springing yet.

--1854, April 2 (*Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 182)

I am surprised to [find] the pond, *i. e.* Fair Haven Pond, not yet fully open. There is [a] large mass of ice in the eastern bay, which will hardly melt tomorrow. [Here there is a footnote: The rain of the 5<sup>th</sup>, P. M., must have finished it.]

--1855, April 4 (*Journal*, Vol. VII, p. 283)

When I awoke this morning I heard the almost forgotten sound of rain on the roof. I think there has not been any of any consequence since Christmas Day. Looking out, I see the air full of fog, and that the snow has gone off wonderfully during the night. The drifts have settled and the patches of bare ground extended themselves, and the river is fast spreading over the meadows.

--1856, April 3 (*Journal*, Vol. VIII, pp. 244-245)

Men's minds run so much on work and money that the mass instantly associate all literary labor with a pecuniary reward. They are mainly curious to know how much money the lecturer or author gets for his work. They think that the naturalist takes so much pains to collect plants or animals because he is paid for it. An Irishman who saw me in the fields making a minute in my note-book took it for granted that I was casting up my wages and actually inquired what they came to, as if he had never dreamed of any other use for writing.

--1859, April 3 (*Journal*, Vol. XII, p. 111)